

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GOTEBO 00199 171409Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01
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SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04
CEA-01 DODE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 L-03 H-02 /100 W
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R 171200Z AUG 77
FM AMCONSUL GOTEBORG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0302
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS GOTEBORG 0199

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SW
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CALLS FOR BELT-TIGHTENING BY SWEDISH
PUBLIC

1. IN A FRONT PAGE INTERVIEW IN THIS SUNDAY'S EDITION OF THE
GOTEBORG DAILY GOTEBORGS-POSTEN, PRIME MINISTER THORBJORN
FALLDIN CALLED ON THE SWEDISH PEOPLE TO "LEVEL OFF" THEIR
EXPECTATIONS IN VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE
COUNTRY. SPEAKING TO MANAGING EDITOR ARNE THOREN, FALLDIN
DECLARED THAT SWEDEN "CANNOT CONTINUE AS IN THE PAST." "THE
COUNTRY," HE SAID, "HAS STEADILY LOST ITS SHARE OF THE EXPORT
MARKET, AND IS ALSO LOSING OUT ON ITS SHARE OF THE DOMESTIC
MARKET IN COMPETITION WITH FOREIGN IMPORTS." "THIS", FALLDIN
ASSERTED, "WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO LIVE WITH."

2. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HIS COALITION GOVERNMENT PLANS
TO PRESENT A "CRISIS PACKAGE" TO THE RIKSDAG WHEN IT CONVENES
THIS AUTUMN, BUT HE DECLINED TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF THE NEW
PROGRAM; HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PRESENT SUGGESTIONS
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REGARDING "WHAT HAS TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO ENABLE US TO
SAFEGUARD EMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE IN THE SHORT AS WELL AS IN THE
LONG RUN." "THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES," HE SAID, "WOULD BE AIMED
AT STRENGTHENING THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF SWEDISH
TRADE AND INDUSTRY." FALLDIN EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE
SWEDISH PUBLIC WOULD ACCEPT THE NECESSARY BELT-TIGHTENING,
POINTING OUT THAT "THE SWEDISH PEOPLE TODAY UNDERSTAND

REALISTICALLY THE MESSAGE THAT WE HAVE LIVED BEYOND OUR MEANS AND NOW WE HAVE TO 'LEVEL OFF' ON ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS, ALTHOUGH A 'RADICAL LOWERING OF OUR LIVING STANDARDS' WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE NECESSARY. ASKED IF HE BELIEVED THAT SWEDEN IS IN A "CATASTROPHIC SITUATION", FALLDIN REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE, BUT SAID THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO ISSUE A "WARNING FLAG". THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE COUNTRY COULD NOT CONTINUE TO LIVE ON CREDIT. "CONSUMPTION," HE ASSERTED, "MUST BE CUT, BUT WITHOUT INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT."

3. COMMENT: THE PRIME MINISTER WAS, OF COURSE, STATING THE OBVIOUS REGARDING SWEDEN'S CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS. HOWEVER, IN OBTAINING THE FALLDIN INTERVIEW, GP EDITOR THOREN SCORED SOMETHING OF A COUP. ONLY A WEEK EARLIER HE HAD PUBLISHED A FRONT-PAGE OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER, APPEALING TO HIM TO GO ON TELEVISION AND RADIO TO SPEAK TO THE SWEDISH PEOPLE ON THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE COUNTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER, THOREN HAD ASSERTED, HAS BEEN FAR TOO RETIRING IN PRESENTING THE ECONOMIC FACTS OF LIFE TO THE PUBLIC, AND FALLDIN SHOULD THEREFORE "STEP FORWARD" IN THE STYLE OF U.S. AND FRENCH PRESIDENTS AND "SPEAK TO THE NATION." AN EDITORIAL IN THIS SUNDAY'S GP INTERPRETS FALLDIN'S INTERVIEW WITH THOREN AS A RESPONSE TO THIS EARLIER APPEAL.
OWENS

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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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